

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1           1. A method comprising:  
2     obtaining a set of locations in a storage area; and  
3     performing an operation on first data in the set of locations in the storage area, wherein  
4           the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,  
5           the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and  
6           the second data are unaffected by the operation.
- 1           2. The method of claim 1 wherein  
2     the operation is replication.
- 1           3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2     obtaining a set of entities, wherein  
3           the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and  
4           each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective  
5           data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.
- 1           4. The method of claim 1 wherein  
2     the set of locations is designated by a requester, and  
3     the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.
- 1           5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
2     obtaining a designation of the operation to be performed on the set of locations.
- 1           6. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2     the requester manages data in the storage area.
- 1           7. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2     the requester performs a management function of a set of management functions for the  
3           storage area.
- 1           8. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2     the requester identifies a respective physical location in the storage area corresponding to  
3           each location of the set of locations.
- 1           9. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2     each location in the set of locations comprises

3 a beginning location and  
4 a number of contiguous locations starting at the beginning location.

1 10. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2 the set of locations is a subset of a plurality of locations, and  
3 the set of locations is designated by a set of indicators, wherein  
4 the set of indicators comprises an indicator for each respective location of the  
5 plurality of locations, and  
6 each indicator of the set of indicators indicates whether the respective location for the  
7 indicator is included in the set of locations.

1 11. The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
2 obtaining a second set of locations; and  
3 performing a second operation on the second set of locations after the first operation is  
4 performed on the set of locations.

1 12. The method of claim 11 wherein  
2 the set of locations and the second set of locations are designated by the requester; and  
3 the operation and the second operation are designated by the requester.

1 13. The method of claim 4 wherein  
2 a sieve for the storage area comprises the operation, and  
3 each operation in the sieve is performed on the set of locations if the sieve is specified.

1 14. A system comprising:  
2 obtaining means for obtaining a set of locations in a storage area; and  
3 performing means for performing an operation on first data in the set of locations in the  
4 storage area, wherein  
5 the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,  
6 the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and  
7 the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1 15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:  
2 second obtaining means for obtaining a set of entities, wherein  
3 the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and  
4 each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective  
5 data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1           16. The system of claim 14 wherein  
2           the set of locations is designated by a requester, and  
3           the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1           17. The system of claim 16 further comprising:  
2           second obtaining means for obtaining a second set of locations; and  
3           second performing means for performing a second operation on the second set of locations  
4           after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.

1           18. A computer-readable medium comprising:  
2           obtaining instructions configured to obtain a set of locations in a storage area; and  
3           performing instructions configured to perform an operation on first data in the set of locations  
4           in the storage area, wherein  
5           the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,  
6           the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and  
7           the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1           19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 further comprising:  
2           second obtaining instructions configured to obtain a set of entities, wherein  
3           the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and  
4           each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective  
5           data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1           20. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein  
2           the set of locations is designated by a requester, and  
3           the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1           21. The computer-readable medium of claim 20 further comprising:  
2           second obtaining instructions configured to obtain a second set of locations; and  
3           second performing instructions configured to perform a second operation on the second set of  
4           locations after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.

1           22. A computer system comprising:  
2           a processor; and  
3           the computer-readable medium of claim 18, wherein  
4           the computer-readable medium is coupled to the processor.

1           23. A system comprising:

2    an obtaining module configured to obtain a set of locations in a storage area; and  
3    a performing module configured to perform an operation on first data in the set of locations in  
4       the storage area, wherein  
5       the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,  
6       the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and  
7       the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1           24. The system of claim 23 further comprising:

2    a second obtaining module configured to obtain a set of entities, wherein  
3       the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and  
4       each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective  
5       data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1           25. The system of claim 23 wherein

2    the set of locations is designated by a requester, and  
3    the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1           26. The system of claim 25 further comprising:

2    a second obtaining module configured to obtain a second set of locations; and  
3    a second performing module configured to perform a second operation on the second set of  
4       locations after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.